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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 30 titles deal with a variety of topics, including the following: (1) cognitive predictors of writing ability, (2) peer evaluation and teacher evaluation of the first drafts of high school compositions, (3) writing as a tool for learning, (4) motivation of college hearing-impaired students to improve English writing skills, (5) the speech events underlying written composition, (6) the effects of a mandated change to minimum competency testing in writing, (7) testing standard modern paragraph theories, (8) the effect of poetic writing on transactional writing, (9) the writing processes of college freshmen, and (10) the written expression of humor by sixth grade gifted children. (MM)

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Written Language and Writing Abilities:

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This bibliography has been compiled as part of a continuing series designed to make information on relevant dissertations available to users of the ERIC system. Monthly issues of Dissertation Abstracts International are reviewed in order to compile abstracts of dissertations on related topics, which thus become accessible in searches of the ERIC data base. Ordering information for dissertations themselves is included at the end of the bibliography.

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COGNITIVE PREDICTORS OF WRITING ABILITY

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FUNCTIONAL SPELLING STUDY AND WRITTEN COMPOSITION OF FIFTH AND THIRD GRADE STUDENTS

Order No. DA8313418

BAIRD, LOUISE OLSEN, ED.D. *Brigham Young University*, 1983. 160pp. Chairman: James W. Dunn

This experimental study was an investigation of the effects of functional spelling study, or study of core vocabulary words misspelled in student writing, upon spelling accuracy and writing quality in written compositions of fifth and third grade students. Six experimental classes participated in a process approach to writing supplemented by functional spelling study. Six control classes participated in a process approach to writing without functional spelling study.

No significant differences were found between experimental and control groups in accuracy of spelling or quality of writing. However, students who did not participate in functional spelling study tended to make greater writing quality improvement during the study than those who participated in functional spelling study. Third grade students misspelled more words when writing about topics that were imaginative and fewer when topics were factual. It was recommended that the variables be studied in depth using more sensitive methods than were used in this study.

COGNITIVE PREDICTORS OF WRITING ABILITY

Order No. DA8318647

BENTON, STEPHEN LEROY, PH.D. *The University of Nebraska - Lincoln*, 1983. 100pp. Adviser: John A. Glover

This paper examines the utility of three measures of cognitive ability in predicting writing ability. A review of research in the area of writing is presented that considers a wide array of topics: (1) the development of writing skills, (2) an analysis of speech and writing modes, (3) behavioral approaches for improving writing, (4) educationally-oriented research, and (5) cognitively-oriented theories of writing. The author juxtaposes the constructive theory of memory with the Flower and Hayes model of writing in presenting a combined problem solving-schema theory framework for research in writing.

Forty-three undergraduate educational psychology students volunteered for the study. All subjects wrote at least two essays on assigned topics for a set time period. Two independent raters scored each essay (interrater reliability r = .83) on a six-point scale. In addition, each subject participated in three information processing tasks presented on a TRS 80 Model III micro-computer. Task 1 was an adaptation of a memory scanning procedure developed by Sternberg (1966). Task 2 was an adaptation of the "Sunday & Tuesday Task" employed by Hunt, Lunneborg, and Lewis (1975) Task 3 was an anagram solving task. Correct number of responses were recorded for each subject on Tasks 1, 2, and 3, and elapsed time measures were recorded for Tasks 2 and 3. A composite score for each subject was also calculated for scores on all essays.

The independent variables (measures on Tasks, 1, 2, and 3) and the dependent variable (composite writing score) were then entered into a multiple regression analysis. The results found a significant relationship among the predictor and criterion variables, with the significance resident in number of correct responses on Task 3. The authors referred to the sources of individual differences in cognition described by Hunt (1978) in attempting to explain the relationship between organizational skills in working memory and writing ability.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CLOZE PROCEDURE AS A PLACEMENT TECHNIQUE IN A WRITING PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Order No. DA8321242

BERMAN, BERNICE, ED.D. *Temple University*, 1983. 143pp. Major Adviser: Dr. Frederic Harwood

The purpose of this study was to examine the cloze procedure for its potential as a writing placement assessment. It was also examined for its ability to diagnose writing problems which may require remediation. An assessment test that is also able to diagnose deficiencies is the type of test that is suggested by a number of researchers who have examined college placement tests.

The procedure involved a comparison of the currently used Temple University Placement Test with the cloze procedure. These two tests were analyzed for their ability to evaluate some eight common problems demonstrated by students of ELECT Writing: incorrect reference of words to things or concepts; inconsistency in the use of tense; omission of necessary words; ambiguous placement of words, phrases, and clauses; awkward or incoherent expressions; confusing use of pronouns; lack of agreement between subject and verb; and nonstandard verb forms. This analysis demonstrated the diagnostic ability of the cloze procedure when it is scored according to the weighted scoring method.

A hundred students took the Placement Test in August, 1982, and the cloze procedure in September, 1982. The statistical results showed that (1) the cloze procedure differentiates students who need remediation in writing from those who do not; (2) neither the cloze procedure nor Temple University's Placement Test predicts course grades for either group of students; (3) there is a significant difference in the number of response types made by each group; and (4) there is a correlation between performance on the written cloze procedure and performance on the Placement Test for each group.

The significance of the results seems to indicate that the cloze procedure is able to both differentiate two groups of students and provide information that may suggest remediation. Combined with an essay test, the cloze procedure may provide an assessment test that also diagnoses problems in writing.

AN EVALUATION OF ENGLISH PLACEMENT INSTRUMENTS FOR FIRST TERM FRESHMEN AT EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY

Order No. DA8315061

CUNNINGHAM, JAMES MICHAEL, ED.D. *Florida Atlantic University and The University of Central Florida*, 1983. 114pp.

The purposes of this study were the assessment of written language skills of Embry-Riddle freshmen, the development of appropriate English placement criteria and the evaluation of the existing remedial English course. Data for the statistical analyses were collected during the 1982 calendar year and describe the test scores and course performances of 418 freshman students.

Thirteen variables, two nominal, seven predictor and four criterion, were intercorrelated using frequency distributions, Pearson product moment correlations, stepwise multiple regression analyses and analysis of variance calculations. Final grades in regular and remedial English along with end-of-course essay and objective test scores were interrelated with high school grade point averages (HS GPA), Scholastic Aptitude Test-Verbal (SAT-V) scores, Test of Standard Written English (TSWE) scores, Embry-Riddle English placement exam (EPE) essay and objective scores, and precourse essay and objective test (Pretest-E, Pretest-O) scores.

Statistically significant correlations were obtained between 86% of

the paired variables; higher coefficients appeared between tests of the same genre (essay or objective) than between tests of different genres. Regression analysis results indicate that writing samples predict essay exam scores best, but that standardized tests and high school averages predict final grades in freshman English better than University prepared measures of writing skills. Final grades in first term English appear to be less dependent upon demonstrated writing proficiency than had been initially hypothesized.

Student gains in end-of-course test scores over precourse levels were significantly greater among students taking remedial English than among students in regular English. Inconsistencies among instructors in the assignment of course grades proved to be significant, especially between faculty of different academic ranks; this common reliability limitation in the grading of individual students by individual instructors was taken into account in the interpretation of results.

Recognizing that English placement errors inhibit both individual student progress and the overall educational process, it is recommended that Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University adopt an optimally weighted combination of writing skills measures, consistent with the findings of this research, to replace its current placement model.

PEER EVALUATION AND TEACHER EVALUATION OF THE FIRST DRAFTS OF HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES' COMPOSITIONS Order No. DA8319886

EARLS, TERRENCE DAVID, ED.D. *Boston University School of Education*, 1983. 160pp. Major Professor: Thomas E. Culliton, Jr.

This study compared peer evaluation and teacher evaluation of first drafts of compositions written by high school sophomores over a ten-week period. Its purpose was to provide information on how writing might be improved in today's schools.

Four intact classes (81 students) participated in the study. Students in two classes evaluated each other's first drafts; a teacher evaluated the first drafts of students in the other two classes. The same forms for the first-draft evaluations were used, and instruction was kept similar in all classes. All students completed final drafts that were graded by the teacher.

Pretest/posttest compositions, on which students had received no evaluation, were collected. During the seventh week of the study, compositions which had received first-draft evaluation were collected. All compositions had been typed before they were rated holistically. Students also completed a STEP 2A Test of Writing Mechanics for a pretest/posttest.

The following conclusions were made: (1) Analysis of covariance indicated that the teacher-evaluation group wrote significantly better at the .01 level on the posttest compositions, though no significant difference at the .05 level was found on the STEP posttests; (2) Analysis of variance indicated no significant difference at the .05 level between groups on the compositions written during the seventh week; nor were posttest compositions of all students significantly better than the pretests.

In this study teacher evaluation of first drafts proved to be a superior method for improving students' writing ability. The time teachers spend reading and responding to student writing is time well spent. Students appear to internalize teacher suggestions and use them to improve their own writing. Teacher evaluation may also encourage students to write more seriously since they know the teacher will be reading what they write.

Further studies comparing teacher evaluation and peer evaluation are warranted, especially since many previous studies have found peer evalution to be an effective evaluation method. Variables should be controlled, and consideration should be given to factors that would enable both teacher evaluation and peer evaluation to work effectively.

THE DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF UNDERGRADUATE WRITING SKILLS: A LONGITUDINAL EVALUATION IN A LARGE PUBLIC STATE UNIVERSITY Order No. DA8314652

GLASSMAN, DIANE L., PH.D. *University of California, Los Angeles*, 1983. 281pp. Chair: Professor Alexander W. Astin

The giant California State University and Colleges (CSUC) system has responded to the national "writing crisis" by instituting placement and proficiency measurements. I set out to examine the English Placement Test (EPT) for entering students and the Writing Proficiency Requirement for upper division students--and their educational ramifications. Specifically, I looked at contributors to longitudinal change in writing test performance for 346 students in the most popular major (business administration) at one of the largest CSUC campuses: California State University, Northridge (CSUN).

A major analytical task of this study was to see how scores on the Writing Proficiency Test (WPT) at CSUN were affected by two classes of independent variables: student entry variables (including the EPT pretest) and environmental variables (primarily reflecting students' academic writing experiences). The broader purpose was, of course, to lay the groundwork for subsequent studies of writing tests' meaning, across institutions as well as majors.

The methodology for analyzing the effects of the two sets of variables was stepwise linear multiple regression. The results were disappointing: no environmental variable showed meaningful effects on WPT score--beyond that predicted based on initial talent.

A measure of simple change--WPT minus EPT score--was used in one regression to see if this theoretically suspect method would produce results that differed substantially from the (preferred) method discussed above. It did. Also, a separate posttest-only analysis was run to test whether traditional uses of evaluation instruments can lead to different--and possibly misleading--causal inferences. Based on the results, use of the longitudinal regression model was recommended for future studies of writing development.

The second major purpose of the study was evaluative. The EPT and WPT were compared to the literature's guidelines for writing testing and judged, despite their drawbacks, to be serious attempts to insure minimal competence of the institution's graduates. Also, suggestions were made for gathering additional data, to help clarify whether the disappointing empirical findings were due to inadequacies in the current information-collection effort and/or in the writing program itself.

THE INTELLECTUAL CONSEQUENCES OF WRITING: WRITING AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING Order No. DA8313441

GOODKIN, VERA H., ED.D. *Rutgers University The State U. of New Jersey (New Brunswick)*, 1982. 393pp. Chairperson: Robert P. Parker

This ethnographic study explores the relationship between writing and thinking learning from an interactionist-constructivist point of view. The investigator has designed an inquiry consisting of case studies in Psychology of Human Relations, the Psychology of Women, Nursing, Dental Assisting, and Entomology, as well as a brief "natural" experiment in Basic Mathematics and Calculus, with two major profiles and several "corroborative cases" in each discipline. The "natural" experiment in mathematics involved verbalized problem-solving done in writing by two students each in Calculus and a Basic Mathematics course. Students and their instructors were interviewed in all areas to find out their views on writing and learning, as well as on writing to learn. What makes this dissertation study unique is that it was conducted in a natural setting. Journals, log books, field books, class notes, reaction papers and brief in-class writings of all types were the recurrent vehicles for thought about self and the world. Writing was found to be instrumental in constructing knowledge in the learner's own language and interactive with listening, reading and social contact. The study further demonstrates

that writing forces the learner to focus on the problem while engaging in speculative thinking to solve problems and weigh consequences.

Analysis of writing samples and interviews confirmed the investigator's hypothesis that writing plays a variety of roles in the thinking learning process and demonstrated the importance of writing in abstracting and making connections. While cognitive styles are different, use of writing in any discipline will enrich cognition. Writing further plays the vitally important role of universal intermediary at every step in the learning process. From the writing of participants in this inquiry, the investigator has derived new writing and learning categories: "instructive", used for learning in academic settings and "commucative," used outside of academia in personal and interpersonal areas. The study further suggests chain-like "continuous" and discrete, "compartmentalized" learning. Outcomes of the inquiry indicate that writing and learning strategies are inexorably intertwined, a fact that has profound implications for teaching and further research.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' COGNITIVE STYLES ON THE FIELD DEPENDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE DIMENSION AND THEIR WRITING PROCESSES

Order No. DA8313229

GRAFFIN, MARCELLA CARPENTER, PH.D. *The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee*, 1982. 194pp. Supervisor: Professor Ernest Spaights

This study investigated the possible relationships between subjects' cognitive styles and their writing processes. Levels of field dependence were measured by the Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT). Subjects were asked to write an essay (Assignment Condition 1) or a letter (Assignment Condition 2) on whether or not higher education students in California should have to begin paying tuition. It was hypothesized that field dependent subjects might produce more effective writing in the letter assignment situation which provided a weak audience cue.

Subjects were students in either the California state college and university system or the community college system in Los Angeles County. Data gathering was conducted during the normal class hours for each of the ten groups participating. Subjects were given the GEFT and were asked to write on one of the two randomly distributed assignments (168 completed).

The pieces of writing, after being typed and having identifying labels removed, were scored using an holistic scoring procedure. Scorers were senior writing tutors at UCLA experienced in holistic scoring procedures using the UCLA Rating Scale. The reliability of the scores was examined by adjusting the score if a third reader was necessary, by doing a correlation analysis between the two scores on the same piece of writing, and by examining the individual scorers' scores using an analysis-or-variance procedure.

Correlation analyses resulted in significant correlations between GEFT scores and the holistic scores on the essays in Assignment Condition 1 and on the letters in Assignment Condition 2. Subjects were divided according to level of field dependence, type of institution attended, and sex, and a series of t-test comparisons were performed, resulting in several significant differences.

Major conclusions were as follows: (1) field independent subjects received higher holistic scores in both assignment conditions than did field dependent subjects; (2) variation in writing performance between field independent and field dependent subjects was more pronounced within the community college sample; (3) variation in assignment condition did seem to have an effect; the letter assignment with audience cue seemed to help field dependent subjects; and (4) no significant pattern of sex difference occurred.

MOTIVATION OF COLLEGE HEARING-IMPAIRED STUDENTS TO IMPROVE ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS

Order No. DA8314287

HAYES-SCOTT, FAIRY CESENA, PH.D. *The University of Michigan*, 1983. 154pp. Chairman: A. Stephen Dunning

This study investigated the relationship of high school English grades, college English grades, written language test score, college degree plans, and locus of control with college hearing-impaired students' academic motivation to improve their English writing skills. The sample included 39 males and 41 females (all freshmen) attending the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, New York. This study had seven hypotheses regarding these students' academic motivation to improve English writing skills.

The hypotheses were tested statistically by three designs. Analysis of variance indicated distinct high, medium, and low levels for hearing-impaired college students to improve their writing skills. By use of a revised Prestatie Motivatie Test (PMT), the investigator determined each student's academic motivation level. Simple correlations showed locus of control and college English grades significantly related with the college hearing-impaired students' academic motivation. The overall significant but low correlations of the five independent variables together predicting academic motivation to improve writing skills was confirmed by the use of a stepwise multiple regression analysis.

In addition to the PMT, the study used a Personal Data Questionnaire and the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire.

The correlations between the five (5) independent variables of this study with its hearing-impaired students' academic motivation were quite low in comparison with non-hearing-impaired students. This study would suggest other variables might be more predominant for the hearing-impaired population. Good education for hearing-impaired students needs to be based on information about their particular needs. Educators' pedagogy must be based on research performed specifically with hearing-impaired students in mind.

POLICY ISSUES IN THE DESIGN OF LARGE SCALE WRITING ASSESSMENTS

Order No. DA3322006

LINDHEIM, ELAINE LAVIS, ED.D. *University of California, Los Angeles*, 1983. 167pp. Chair: Professor Marvin C. Alkin

With the recent advent of basic skills and minimum competency testing programs, the direct measurement of student writing ability has assumed increasing importance. Many large scale testing programs now require students to compose one or more pieces of writing as a part of a proficiency assessment. The design of such writing tests presents many technical, procedural, and political issues that must be resolved if the assessments are to be successful.

This dissertation discusses the issues commonly faced in developing a large scale writing assessment program. These issues are delineated both through a review of the relevant research and through a case study documenting the development of one statewide writing assessment program. A discussion of the problems and successes encountered in establishing this particular assessment program provides an opportunity to suggest ways in which future practice may be improved.

The issues related to the direct assessment of student writing ability that are treated in the dissertation include (1) identifying the audiences for an assessment, (2) selecting the objectives to be measured, (3) determining an appropriate theoretical base for the assessment, (4) developing a valid and reliable test, (5) designing defensible rating procedures, (6) determining appropriate test length, (7) assuring the equivalence of the assessment across testing occasions, and (8) setting performance standards.

AN HEURISTIC FOR ACHIEVING AUTHENTIC VOICE IN INFORMATIVE RESEARCH PAPERS: BURKE'S PENTAD COMBINED WITH KINNEAVY'S THEORY OF INFORMATIVE DISCOURSE

Order No. DA8319635

LONG, MAXINE MARTIN, PH.D. *The University of Texas at Austin*, 1983. 210pp. Supervisor: Charles R. Kline, Jr.

The purpose of this study was to explore the problem faced by many beginning college students who are trying to achieve an authentic voice when they write library research papers.

The problem as outlined in Chapter One is two-fold: assignments which place more emphasis on the form of the research paper than its content and textbooks which offer only general advice on style in informative writing. In Chapter Two I point out that the problem is further compounded by an inherited tradition of classical rhetoric which emphasizes only one voice, which is that used in persuasive discourse.

Chapter Three shows the reaction to that one traditional voice. Burke and Richards, for example, have expanded the definition of rhetoric. Kinneavy, Britton and Moffett have defined other kinds of discourse. Of particular concern to us is surprise value. Still other rhetoricians like Booth, Ong, Gibson, Macrorie and Elbow have been concerned with helping students develop an authentic voice in their own writing. By authentic voice, I mean one that is original, reliable, genuine and effective.

While it appeared that the field of new rhetoric would provide material for the heuristic, I did examine in Chapter Four the applied fields of informative writing: journalism and technical writing. Neither area offered a solution. Traditionally, journalists have emphasized surprise value and often sacrificed comprehensiveness and factuality. By contrast, technical writers have sacrificed surprise value in the interest of thoroughness and verifiability.

In an attempt to solve this problem, this dissertation proposes a new model, drawn from the new rhetoricians, designed to serve as an heuristic for the student and teacher alike.

The new model combines James Kinneavy's theory of informative discourse with Kenneth Burke's pentad and Wayne Booth's notion of the implied author. The model consists of twenty questions which the student can ask of himself when writing the paper and the teacher can use when evaluating the finished work.

The value of the model is its systematic approach to dealing with the problem and its application to both process and product.

WRITING QUALITY, COHERENCE AND COHESION

Order No. DA8313552

MCCULLEY, GEORGE ALLEN, ED.D. *Utah State University*, 1983. 180pp. Major Professors: Dr. James P. Shaver, Dr. William J. Strong

This study investigated the interrelationships among writing quality, coherence, and intersentence cohesion for the purpose of providing evidence of the construct validity of coherence with writing quality and the concurrent validity of cohesion with coherence in the persuasive mode of discourse.

A random sub-sample of 493 papers was drawn from the random sample of the 2,784 persuasive papers written by 17-year-olds during the 1978-79 national writing assessment, conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). This sub-sample had been scored for writing quality by NAEP, using a primary-trait persuasion instrument developed by NAEP, and was rescored for coherence using the NAEP primary-trait measure of coherence. In addition, a random sample of 120 papers was drawn from the original sub-sample. These 120 papers were scored using the indices contained in the Halliday/Hasan cohesion taxonomy. Scores from the quality assessment were correlated, using zero-order and partial (with manuscript length held constant) correlational analyses, with scores from the coherence and cohesion assessments. Scores from the coherence assessment were also correlated with cohesion scores. In addition, multiple regression was used to explore the relationships between scores on the quality and coherence measures, as dependent variables, with scores on the cohesion indices as the independent variables. The results of these analyses provided evidence that coherence has construct validity with quality, regardless of whether manuscript length is held constant or not; that only one type of cohesion measure has construct validity with quality when manuscript length is held constant; that two of the cohesion measures have construct validity with the coherence measure when manuscript length is held constant; and that a linear combination of the cohesion measures has concurrent validity with the coherence measures.

ON THEMATIC STRUCTURE IN ENGLISH EXPOSITION: A STUDY OF NEWS COMMENTARY TEXTS

Order No. DA8324125

MCCUNE, GRACE ANNE, PH.D. *The University of Michigan*, 1983. 279pp. Chairman: Richard Rhodes

This study of thematic structure in English expository discourse proposes two expository frames to be added to the list proposed by Jones (1977). (Her term was expository *scripts.)*

The theoretical basis for this study is Rhodes' (1981) notion that *themes* are the basic propositional units of texts, and that themes are related to one another hierarchically by means of a set of semantic relations called Inter-Propositional Relations (IPRs). These themes also have a range of relative importance to the text, which is called theme rank. This study shows: (a) that particular combinations of IPRs sometimes operate as unitary; (b) that these configurations function in expository discourse as frames, structuring expectations. Some of Jones' "scripts" are reinterpreted as configurations of IPRs (the others being simple IPRs, not configurations). Two more expository frames are proposed as additions to this list.

The data used are four news commentary texts: three texts by syndicated columnists, and one newscast commentary. These are a particularly rich source for the study of configurations because of their complex argumentation. The expository frames proposed to account for this corpus are: (1) a complex cause chain with particular patterns of embedding and bi-directional linearization, and (2) an interaction of cause and contrast in which a causal relationship is based on an embedded contrast. The relationship of the text to implied material is also discussed.

Further comments are made about connective, syntactic and lexical marking of certain IPRs in the four texts. Correlations of certain connectives and syntactic constructions with IPRs is observed. Marking is notably absent for causal relations and for relationships that occur at a high level in the hierarchy.

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF PLACEMENT ESSAY EXAMINATION SCORING BY WRITING TEACHERS AND NON-WRITING TEACHERS WITH CONSIDERATION OF CONTENT EFFECTS ON RATINGS

Order No. DA8315058

MCLEMORE, MARY, ED.D. *Florida Atlantic University and The University of Central Florida*, 1983. 119pp.

Measurement experts have criticized the use of essay examinations, chiefly because of their scoring unreliability. Research has emphasized scoring inconsistencies and that scores of essay examinations are frequently led by composition errors or other writing quality factors to grade the subject matter--content--of the essays inconsistently. Studies critical of essay scoring have emphasized the content of essay answers and have used scorers with minimal expertise in the essays' subject areas.

Recent research reveals that, under certain conditions, i.e., when writing experts are scoring for placement, using appropriate grading criteria, reliability rates for essay scoring are improving. Besides making distinctions between grading conditions and purposes, recent studies distinguish between content and writing skills, and emphasize examination of how content characteristics of student essays influence teachers' ratings.

This study focused on whether freshman placement essays would

be graded consistently by different groups of college faculty, experts in writing and experts in the topic of the essays. Also examined were how content designated as *strong* and *weak* would influence the overall scores and the scoring of writing quality.

Ten student placement essays were selected, designated and validated to fit characteristics appropriate to the study. These were scored for writing quality by writing teachers during an actual freshman placement session. Next, they were scored for both content and writing quality by non-writing teachers, content experts, and then, again graded by the writing teachers, this time for both writing quality and content.

Results generally showed consistency among and between grader groups when rating writing quality and when rating content. Analysis of variance revealed no significant differences at the .05 level for two of the groups who scored for content, but did show differences between the quality ratings of non-writing teachers and writing teachers when the latter group graded during the workshop condition.

Both writing teachers and non-writing teachers graded content similarly, but the non-writing teachers' ratings of content were closer to the designations than those of the writing teachers. Writing teachers, however, were somewhat more influenced by writing quality, less influenced by content, than were the non-writing teachers.

PREFERENCES FOR FORMS OF WRITTEN COMPOSITION AS REPORTED BY SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS IN SELECTED OKLAHOMA SCHOOLS

Order No. DA8314779

MERRELL, CATHY JEAN STANGLE, PH.D. *The University of Oklahoma*, 1983. 95pp. Major Professor: Charlyce King

This study consisted of a descriptive survey on the preferences for forms of written composition among seventh and eighth graders in selected Oklahoma schools. The findings extended the information found in the National Assessment of Educational Progress and reported by Hogan (May, 1980). Hogan stated that even though there was a decline in the writing interests of students in grades six through eight there was an unusual interest in letter writing.

A total of 532 seventh and eighth grade boys and girls responded to the survey by ranking 13 forms of composition. (Newspaper articles, unrhymed poetry, rhymed poetry, paragraphs, plays, fictional short stories, nonfiction short stories, diaries/journals, research reports, letters to friends, letters to businesses, essays with topic assigned, and essay with free choice of topic.) Students were also asked to spend 20 minutes writing in any form of their choice and on any topic. Actual writing quality was not assessed but was checked to see if the form corresponded to that form ranked as number one or two by the student. Total counts and percentages for responses were recorded based on grade level, sex, and grade point average.

Findings showed that both seventh and eighth grade girls reported letters to friends as a first choice (38.19%) and fictional short stories as second (17.36%). Seventh and eighth grade boys reported fictional short stories as first (37.59%) and letters to friends as second (19.15%). Overall, letters to friends accounted for 30.26% of the total responding and fictional short stories as 25% of the total. All grade Levels and sexes showed over 50% as matching the first choice of form when given the choice of a form to actually write.

Background information is given on what was found in regard to teaching composition and writing interests of seventh and eighth graders. Recommendations for the middle school teacher of composition are given at the end of the study.

THE SPEECH EVENTS UNDERLYING WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Order No. DA8312921

MYERS, MILES ALVIN, PH.D. *University of California, Berkeley*, 1982. 262pp.

The study examines the rhetorical situations or speech events which underlie written composition at various levels of competency in secondary schools, and the development of these speech events in grades 4 through 12. The assumption is that written language is a monologic imitation of oral language situations. The child begins by imitating oral language events in the monologues of egocentric speech. Later this egocentric speech is internalized in inner speech, and still later this inner speech is restructured in written form. The speech events underlying written composition, the result of this process of compression into inner monologue and then restructuring into written form, have three kinds of structures: (1) *distancing*, ranging from a close to a detached relationship between the writer-speaker and the reader; (2) *processing*, projecting a world ranging from approximate and loosely connected to normative and hierarchical; and (3) *modeling*, projecting a text ranging from transitory and casual to permanent and archival. These three dimensions are clustered in four prototypes of speech events--*encoding*, *conversations*, *presentations*, and *ritual*--each of which is a dominant form at different levels of writing competency.

At the lowest levels of writing competency, student writing has an underlying *encoding* speech event. In this speech event, the student uses a primitive form of *conversations* as a scaffold or support system while the student concentrates attention on the coding of letters, words, and phrases. When coding is automatic, attention is directed to larger units such as speech event structures. But when coding is not automatic, as is the case with students at the lowest levels of competency, attentional capacity is used for processing letters, words, and phrases. Writing samples from four hundred students and video tapes of five case studies were used to examine the characteristics of the *encoding* speech event.

At the middle levels of writing competency, student writers begin with *conversational* speech events as the dominant structures and then increase the influence of *presentational* or lecture-type structures. Writing samples show that these writers also seem to maintain not just one dominant speech event, but layers of speech events with particular relationships among them. . . (Author's abstract exceeds stipulated maximum length. Discontinued here with permission of author.) UMI

AN ANALYSIS OF APPLICATION OF NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

Order No. DA8317255

NAGY, LAURA LEE, PH.D. *Kent State University*, 1983. 411pp. Director: Bruce Harkness

The dissertation examines the relationship between the writer's art and the writer's craft from the dual perspective of author and critic. Certain aspects of narrative technique are applied in the course of writing an original novel, and those aspects are analyzed in a critical essay that presents both the author's conception of his technical problems and aesthetic goals and the critic's evaluation of how successfully those problems are solved and the goals achieved. The technical problems studied in the novel and essay are twofold. First, the determination and control of narrative voice are examined, with an

analysis of the applications of different modes of interior monologue in the novel and their relationship to the thematic and narrative structure of the work. The second technical problem studied is the relationship between the movement of time within the novel and the nonsequential arrangement of episodes from the three time frames contained within the basic narrative line. The concepts of narrative units, narrative dynamics, and transitional units are related to the novel's temporally nonlinear plot structure, and the concept of congruent episodes as nonrelated but thematically corresponding narrative units is also discussed.

LEARNING FROM WRITING IN TWO CONTENT AREAS: A CASE STUDY / PROTOCOL ANALYSIS

Order No. DA8314481

NEWELL, GEORGE EDWARD, PH.D. *Stanford University*, 1983. 215pp.

English teachers continue to be responsible for writing instruction, but it is unclear how writing complements instruction in other academic disciplines. While content area teachers assign writing, they do so mainly to test for information that students have already learned. The writing process, however, may operate as a powerful heuristic for learning content area information.

Two general questions focus the research: (1) What are the effects of notetaking, answering comprehension questions and writing an analytical essay on learning information in prose passages as measured by passage recall, gain in concept knowledge, and application of concepts; and (2) What are the effects of the three writing tasks on composing and learning operations?

Eight high school juniors, four girls and four boys, participated in the study. All attended a suburban high school in the San Francisco Bay area.

The data were collected using a mixed design. Subject area (Science and Social Studies) and sex were between - subject factors and passage-specific knowledge (much and little) and writing task (notetaking, study questions and analytical essay) were within - subject factors. The design was a 2 x 2 x 2 x 3 factorial with repeated measures, producing 24 cells and 48 data points. Dependent measures included total and subscores for recall of idea units, a measure of passage-specific knowledge, and a score for application of concepts.

ANOVA results indicated that passage-specific knowledge was significant for recall of relationship units. There were no significant effects for task or passage-specific knowledge for application of concepts. ANCOVA results indicated that task was highly significant for concept knowledge gain with essay writing producing the highest scores.

A series of ANOVA's were used to examine how task and prior knowledge affected writing and learning processes. Task was significant for total operations, planning, and translating. Passage-specific knowledge was significant for organizing.

The data suggest that essay writing may aid the learning of concepts found in prose passages. Essay writing produced more writing and learning operations overall suggesting that essay writing required more extensive and deliberate thought of the content in the prose passages.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION WITH APPLICATION TO A SELECTED AREA OF STUDY IN SECONDARY ENGLISH

Order No. DA8314041

NEWTON, JO BETH DRYSDALE, ED.D. *The University of Alabama*, 1983. 143pp.

The purposes of this study were to develop a model for experiential education and to apply the model to a selected area of secondary English. The review of literature included a historical review, the need for experiential education, a description of programs, effective program characteristics, programs related to secondary English, and processes related to experiential education.

A survey of related literature, discussions with faculty, personal perceptions, and validation procedures provided the theoretical base and functional aspects for the development of the model. Four phases were utilized in establishing a basic framework for the experiential education process model. The four phases included (a) program preparation, (b) experience and debriefing, (c) learning confirmed, and (d) program evaluation and redesign. The process model provided a procedure for program preparation, for guiding learners through a learning cycle as they have experiences, and for program evaluation and redesign. The learning cycle (5.-12.) can be repeated in experience-based programs and also can be applied to experience-based activities in a traditional program.

The application of the model to secondary English described an experiential writing course related to each procedure in the process. The course included outside-of-class experiences, writing experiences, and publication experiences. Other applications of the model to secondary English were briefly explained. The model is applicable to oral English, writing, reading, and literature programs and activities. The model also has many possibilities for application in other academic subjects.

A VIDEO OBSERVATIONAL STUDY OF THE WRITING PROCESS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN A NON-ACADEMIC SITUATION

Order No. DA8316418

NICHOLAS, SUSAN KEHOE, PH.D. *Oakland University*, 1983. 206pp. Adviser: George E. Coon

Purpose. This investigation addresses three major objectives regarding the writing process in non-academic situations: (1) the identification of heuristics in the writing process that lead to effective communication, (2) the effect of traditional college writing instruction, (3) the effect of skill in writing.

Procedure. Skilled and less-skilled subjects completing either a freshman composition or a business and technical writing class were selected to compose a memorandum addressing an ill-structured, non-academic situation using a think-aloud procedure. Four subjects were selected according to the following criteria: (1) a writing sample analogous to that required in the experimental task to determine writing skill, and (2) subjects' adaptability to the think-aloud procedure. The two target classes from which students were selected both employed a process-oriented approach to writing instruction.

Subjects viewed a videotape which included text, non-text, and mixed modalities to convey the ill-structured nature of the non-academic situation. The subjects participated in a warm-up session directly preceding the writing episode to become familiar with the think-aloud procedure. The writing process of each subject was recorded on a videotape which merged views of the writer's behavior and the text as it was constructed. The resulting memoranda were rated by business executives for adequacy in dealing with the non-academic situation. This evaluation guided the analysis of the writing process data by indicating segments of the protocol where communication heuristics were developed. In the analysis, protocol comments were classified according to plan-making and rhetorical constraint categories.

Findings. The findings of the protocol analysis determined the presence of two major heuristics influencing effective communication in this investigation: (1) plan-operationalizing which enabled the subjects to overcome rhetorical constraints, and (2) inference-making which enabled the subjects to deal with the ambiguities in the information. These heuristics were not found exclusively in either the instructional or skill grouping. This finding suggests that writing performance in non-academic situations may not be satisfied by traditional college instruction in writing and rhetoric. The investigation concludes with implications for college writing instruction and suggestions for writing process research.

AN ANALYSIS OF SMALL GROUP RESPONSE IN THE WRITING PROCESS OF NINTH GRADE STUDENTS

Order No. DA8318677

RITCHIE, JOY S., PH.D. *The University of Nebraska - Lincoln*, 1983. 248pp. Advisers: James P. O'Hanlon, Allan Dittmer

This study examines the use of peer response groups as a means of encouraging growth in young writers. Ethnographic data collection included observation of the writing classroom for a semester, tape recording responses of all groups in the classroom, selecting responses from a single group for analysis, and obtaining perceptions from students and teacher concerning the group process. Findings included a description of responses in each group episode as they relate to the context in which they occurred, a description of the development of responses during the semester, and hypothesis concerning the multi-dimensional functions of responses in the writing process. Student responses developed in variety and complexity, combining values projected by peers and the teacher and their own sense of the qualities of good writing. Those responses regulate group activity, support social interaction, encourage writers, reflect back to students the content and quality of the writing, and enable students to explore alternative ideas and types of writing.

MANDATED CHANGE TO A MINIMUM COMPETENCY TEST IN WRITING: A CASE STUDY IN A SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Order No. DA8313386

SCHUMANN, ROSEMARY COLLERY, ED.D. *Columbia University Teachers College*, 1983. 292pp. Sponsor: Professor Dorothy Strickland

This study describes and assesses the process of adaptation by a suburban school district to a state mandated minimum competency test in writing, the latter being one part of a revised Competency Testing Program mandated by the Regents of New York State in March 1979.

The study focuses attention on responses to the mandate within an organizational context and views the school organization through a unified approach which utilizes the following three dimensions: structures, processes, symbols. The concept of the school organization as a loosely coupled system is incorporated for the analysis.

The case study was developed mainly through informal interviews, participant observation and study of internal documents. Analysis was an ongoing process throughout all phases of the study. Near the end of this process the researcher used a second suburban school district on a more limited basis for comparison and to sharpen the analysis of events. The second district's SES level was much lower and it had much larger numbers of students for whom remediation was mandated.

The unexpected result was that the mandated tests simplified life by acting as a clear-cut goal. The mandate became an effective buffer for more generalized accountability pressures. There had been ongoing accountability work in all departments which was discontinued with issuance of the mandate. The study found that participants in all organizational roles were positive and/or accepting of the mandate as a good thing. Within two years of its issuance, writing became an important part of the Language Arts curriculum, K-12. Loose coupling and the domain of symbolism were both important in the adaptation process.

EFFECTS OF GUIDED IMAGERY EXERCISES VERSUS WRITING AND EDITING EXERCISES ON WRITING ANXIETY AND SELF-PERCEPTION OF WRITING ABILITY OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Order No. DA8318431

SHILLING, LILLESS MCPHERSON, PH.D. *The Ohio State University*, 1983. 287pp. Adviser: Professor I. Keith Tyler

This study was conducted to determine the effects of guided imagery exercises, when compared with writing and editing exercises, on reducing writing anxiety and improving self-perception of writing ability of health professionals.

A nonrandomized control group pretest-posttest design was used. The treatment period lasted four weeks, with sessions meeting two and one-half hours a week. The researcher conducted two continuing education workshops entitled "How to Reduce Writing Anxiety and Improve Writing Skills." The workshops were similar except for a one-half hour segment each week during which either a guided imagery or writing and editing exercise was used. The workshops also included other techniques for reducing writing anxiety (for example, peer evaluation and sharing of writing problems). Treatments were randomly assigned to workshop groups. The two treatment groups were compared with each other and with a control group. Subjects were 74 adults from Central Ohio, about equally divided between the three groups.

The primary data collection instruments were the Daly-Miller Writing Apprehension Test and the Shilling Writing Ability Self-Assessment. The instruments were administered at the beginning and end of the workshops and four weeks later.

T-tests indicated that the guided imagery and writing and editing groups significantly reduced their writing anxiety and improved their self-perception of writing ability. The effects lasted at least a month after the workshops ended. The control group showed no significant change.

Although the results favored the guided imagery group, analysis of covariance indicated the posttest means for the two treatment groups were not significantly different. The treatment groups differed significantly from the control group at posttest time.

The researcher concluded that it is possible to reduce writing anxiety and improve self-perception of writing ability in a relatively short period, that guided imagery and writing and editing exercises are almost equally effective, that the positive results were probably due to the workshops as a whole, rather than to any one particular technique, and that a program to change attitudes toward writing should consist of a variety of techniques.

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL ARTICLES PERTAINING TO COMPOSITION FROM JANUARY 1969 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1982 AND A RELATED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Order No. DA8314791

SHOAF, EDNA M., PH.D. *The University of Oklahoma*, 1983. 155pp. Major Professor: Charles E. Butler

The purpose of this research was to ascertain trends or emphases in content, institutional and regional affiliations of authors, and educational levels of articles published within the thirteen-year period from January of 1969 through September of 1982. A secondary purpose was to produce an annotated bibliography for the use of elementary and secondary composition teachers.

Data were reported in numbers and then converted into percentages, which were indicative of the degree of emphasis given to each item. Findings revealed that patterns in article content can be classified into four distinct areas: those which remain stable across time, those which fluctuate, those which were noncontemporary, and those which were contemporary. Trends were also apparent in the educational affiliation and geographical location of authors and educational level of articles. Authors were predominately from the North East sector of the United States and were affiliated with institutions of higher education. Articles were predominately written for an audience at the higher educational level.

The journals published by the National Council of Teachers of English contained a majority of published articles; therefore, those articles included in the annotated bibliography were from these sources. This author concluded that more emphasis should be given to the interests and needs of secondary and elementary teachers by those in the field who are preparing articles for publication.

TESTING STANDARD MODERN PARAGRAPH THEORIES

Order No. DA8318030

UTLEY, THOMAS HASKELL, PH.D. *The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col.*, 1983. 251pp. Supervisor: Professor John R. May

This study tests the relative effectiveness of the standard modern paragraph theories of A. S. Becker, Francis Christensen, and Paul C. Rodgers, Jr., three major theorists contributing more sophisiticated explanations of the form of paragraphs than that of Alexander Bain, whose theory as summarized in the familiar principles of *unity, coherence,* and *emphasis* has dominated textbook explanations of paragraphing since the late nineteenth century.

In this test the three theories have been applied to fourteen selected professional essays appearing in six of the best-selling composition readers. Of these essays, seven, designated as *classical*, are written by the most frequently anthologized essayists, and seven, designated as *ephemeral*, are randomly selected essays with topical appeal.

The components of the three theories tested are Becker's tagmemic patterns and four operations for variation, his lexical equivalence classes, lexical transitions, and verb sequences; Christensen's coordinate, subordinate, and mixed sequences and his dictum concerning the topic sentence in the initial position; and Rodgers' concepts of the stadia of discourse and secondary influences on paragraphing.

The study presents a summary of the theoretical assumptions of Becker, Christensen, and Rodgers; a summary of the statistical findings of the applications of the three theories; a comparative summary of the conformity and non-conformity of paragraphs reflecting the application of Becker's and Christensen's theories; a justification of the 100% conformity of the paragraphs to Rodgers' theory; and finally some reflections on the applications of the findings to the teaching of college composition.

In terms of the overall effectiveness of the three theories in this sample, Becker's theory works 32.8% of the time, Christensen's 30.8%, and Rodgers' 100%. The conclusion that can be drawn from the much greater effectiveness of Rodgers' theory is that, with his discourse-centered theory as opposed to Becker's and Christensen's sentence-based theories, Rodgers allows for sequences of discourse not necessarily conterminous with paragraph boundaries and for more flexible concepts of fluctuations in the abstraction levels within sequences. Another conclusion is that Becker's and Christensen's theories, with modifications, could more formally describe the reality of paragraph structure.

THE EFFECT OF POETIC WRITING ON TRANSACTIONAL WRITING: A CASE-STUDY INVESTIGATION OF THE WRITING OF THREE HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Order No. DA8313458

WAITKUS, LINDA, ED.D. *Rutgers University The State U. of New Jersey (New Brunswick)*, 1982. 236pp. Chairperson: Janet Emig

Purpose. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of Britton's poetic mode of discourse on his transactional mode of discourse. The study delineates the specific ways that practice in poetry and short story writing affects students' transactional/expository writing.

Design. This case-study investigation considered the writing of three high school seniors over an eighteen-week time period. Pre- and post-transactional essays were collected. Between essays, English instruction focused on the poetic mode of discourse. Each student's second transactional essay was compared to his/her first in order to discover the changes which occurred. His/her poetic writing, completed between the two essays, was then analyzed in order to determine its effect on the second transactional essay. An index noting the changes between the two essays accompanies the analysis of each student's writing collection.

Findings. After writing stories and plays, the students' transactional writing improved in ways traceable to their poetic writing: (a) the students were more involved in their writing, each demonstrating a more personal voice and selecting a more meaningful topic; (b) the students demonstrated a heightened awareness of their reader, using more precise diction and providing a fuller context; (c) the students' papers were more cohesive, focusing on one topic; (d) the students' ideas were better supported; (e) the students seemed to take more risks in their writing, selecting more complex topics, coordinating more difficult ideas, experimenting with language, and using new sentence constructions. These findings question the traditional practice of separating creative writing from expository writing instruction. Since student practice in the poetic mode has a positive influence on their transactional writing, experience in poetic writing should be incorporated within any English class.

REVISION IN A RHETORICAL CONTEXT: CASE STUDIES OF FIRST YEAR COLLEGE WRITERS

Order No. DA8321646

WALL, SUSAN VIETH, PH.D. *University of Pittsburgh*, 1982. 335pp.

These case studies report on research which followed three first year students through a semester of composition instruction at the University of Pittsburgh. The subjects represented the three levels at which most entering students are placed: basic 1, basic 2, and average. I interviewed students bi-weekly and had access to all their work and to all course materials.

The courses in which these students were enrolled were designed as "spiral" curricula, sequences of assignments all related to the same topic. Because assignments typically asked students to reconsider the ideas expressed in their previous papers, revision as invention, what Donald Murray calls "internal" revision, was an essential part of what was to be learned. In response to this instruction, the three students chose to discuss issues which represented serious and long-standing problems in their lives, questions or conflicts with no ready solutions or simple answers. In attempting to mediate among the different "languages" they had for writing about these problems, subjects came by the end of the term to understand their need to explain these issues to themselves and the role that "internal" revision could play in that process.

Their ability to work with revision this way, however, was initially limited by their assumptions about the nature of authority in academic discourse and about the role of revision in the composing process. These writers seemed unfamiliar with the kinds of tentative statements, exploratory drafting, and creative rereading that discovery writing involves. Further, their "theory" of revision was solely "external," that is, revision undertaken for the sake of an imagined reader. They found it difficult and confusing to reconceive of revision as a reflexive process, a dialogue of the self with the self. The implications of the study, then, are that teachers need to recognize the assumptions which make it hard for students to understand and to risk revision as a form of invention, and to teach in ways that are consistent and systematic and which show students directly the kinds of rereading and revising that "re-seeing" their ideas entails.

THE EFFECT OF SELECTED STUDENT FACTORS AND CERTAIN SYNTACTIC INDICES IN PREDICTING OVERALL WRITING QUALITY AND FINAL GRADES IN A FRESHMAN COMPOSITION COURSE

Order No. DA8309378

WHITE, LIZZIE BARNES, ED.D. *Northeast Louisiana University*, 1982. 138pp. Major Adviser: M. S. Nicklas

The purpose of this study was to determine which student factors and which measures of certain syntactic indices, singly or in combination, would most effectively predict overall writing quality and

final grades in a basic composition course.

Two writing samples on uniform topics were elicited from forty-eight freshman English students enrolled in English 102 at Louisiana Tech University, Ruston. The first sample was taken at the beginning of the winter quarter, 1981; the second, at the end of it. Both sets of papers were evaluated for quality by three experienced English teachers, whose ratings were tested for reliability. The investigator made frequency counts of the following syntactic indices: (1) number of words, (2) number of T-units, and (3) number of subordinate clauses. Utilizing the above raw data, the computer calculated three derived syntactic indices: (1) mean T-unit length, (2) mean clause length, and (3) subordination ratio.

Personnel records of the university were utilized to obtain the student factor data: (1) ACT composite score, (2) ACT English subtest score, (3) high school grade point average, and (4) Mass Examination score. Final grades in English 102 were obtained from the respective teachers of the course.

The four student factors were significantly related to both pretest and posttest quality. No significant correlations were found between pretest/posttest syntax variables and pretest/posttest writing quality. Final grades correlated significantly with pretest quality but not with posttest quality, with the four student factors but with only one of the syntax variables--number of T-units.

Stepwise multiple regression analysis showed quite clearly that student factors more successfully predicted writing quality than did the syntax variables. The best single predictors of overall writing quality were HSGPA and ACTE ($r = .71$). The regression analyses further indicated that the combined effects of certain syntax variables with Mass Examination were significant in the prediction of final grades.

THE WRITING PROCESSES OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN

Order No. DA8319308

WRIGHT, JAMES RONALD, PH.D. *University of South Carolina*, 1983. 415pp.

The major purpose of this investigation was to compare the writing behaviors of thirty unskilled college freshmen writers and thirty-nine average college freshmen writers. Participants were designated as unskilled or average on the basis of scores on the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress Writing Skills Test, Level J, Form X.

For an eleven-week academic quarter, the researcher observed the students in a typical classroom setting as they wrote in response to two descriptive and two transactional writing assignments. Students were given fifty minutes to write in response to each of the four writing assignments. The results of the *t*-test for independent samples indicated that there were no significant differences between the unskilled writers and the average writers for mean pre-writing time, the mean number of words written per minute, and the mean number of pauses (time intervals of one to five seconds during which the writer ceased to write during the process of writing). However, significant differences were noted at the .001 level of confidence for mean composing time, the mean number of hesitations (time intervals of six to fifteen seconds during which the writer ceased to write during the process of writing), the mean number of stops (time intervals of sixteen seconds or more during which the writer ceased to write during the process of writing), the mean number of total in-process revisions, and the mean number of total inter-draft revisions.

The chi-square test of independent samples for the mean responses to a fifty-six item questionnaire administered prior to observing the writing of the students indicated that there were no significant differences between unskilled and average writers for previous experiences in writing and related language activities, attitudes toward writing, practices and beliefs considered important for effective written expression, previous instructional experiences in writing, perceived instructional needs in writing, beliefs about how the teaching of writing can be improved, and respondents' perceptions of the processes they engage in while writing.

The Pearson-r statistic indicated that the quality ratings for three experienced teachers of English for the 328 essays by the sixty-nine freshmen revealed a positive correlation of .75 between the mean raw scores on the Sequential Test of Educational Progress and the mean quality ratings of the three trained evaluators.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE WRITTEN EXPRESSION OF HUMOR BY SIXTH-GRADE GIFTED CHILDREN

Order No. DA8312328

ZIFF, SELMA SALLY, ED.D. *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*, 1982. 114pp.

This qualitative investigation of the use of humor in written expression of sixth-grade children was conducted with two major questions as focus: (1) Are there identifiable conventions of initiated usage in the types and frequency of humor expression in written work of sixth-grade gifted students? (2) Are there identifiable conditions which tend to elicit humorous written expression from sixth-grade gifted children?

An analysis of three examples of written work by each of 186 students in five Gifted Center classes indicated considerable use of humor. Patterns of usage emerged, the most conspicuous pertaining to frequency of humor use in the three assignments. Frequency of humor use paralleled the continuum of intimacy of the assignments. Humor appeared most often in the most initimate assignment. Humor was used least in the least intimate assignment. Interpretations of this pattern are suggested in terms of societal awareness and self-disclosure. Wit appeared more often than any other category of humor technique, indicating a preference by these youngsters for that form of humor which involves the greatest amount of cognitive ability. The relatively little use of Dig, the biting humor technique, is viewed as possibly related to the absence of emotionally laden subject matter.

Students identified as gifted in all areas with no distinguishable bent used humor more often than any other group. Although those students gifted in Math used Wit less than did any other group, this may not have indicated a lack of creativity in these high IQ children as Creativity was considered an attribute of intelligence.

Children of working mothers used humor to a greater degree than did those whose mothers were at home, possibly related to the greater independence and lesser conformity fostered in the former.

The teacher's manner of dealing with the behavior and work of students: informal, demanding, non-directive, traditional, appeared to be more highly related to student humor production than was the personality/style (static or dynamic) of the teacher.

Implications for education were discernible and areas for future investigation became evident.

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